

February 14, 2018

Postal Regulatory Commission
901 New York Avenue, NW Suite 200
Washington, DC 20268

Postal Regulatory Commission
Submitted 2/14/2018 12:00:26 PM
Filing ID: 103795
Accepted 2/14/2018

RE: Docket RM 2017-3

Dear Commissioners:

On behalf of Mercy Ships poorest of the poor, we urge the Commission to reconsider the proposed rate increases for nonprofit organizations. Our organization relies on the United States Postal Service to raise funds and to communicate with our donors and supporters.

Mercy Ships is a charity who addresses the global surgery crisis plaguing our world. The lack of access to safe, affordable surgery kills more people each year than HIV/AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis, combined. This is the scary reality faced by the poor in the nations where our volunteer medical professionals spends weeks, months, or years of their lives trying to make a difference—one patient at a time. With the support of donors, sponsors and even the USPS, we operate the largest civilian hospital ship in the world, and work diligently to bring hope and healing to areas of the world where it is in desperately short supply.

We believe that we have a somewhat symbiotic relationship with the USPS—as we spend millions of dollars each year in postage. However, with this proposed increase, we will be forced to pull back spending dramatically, and necessarily explore other ways to generate revenue to affect the global change to which we are committed.

The Postal Service plays a vital role in supporting the philanthropic sector. For Mercy Ships, it is the primary method we use to communicate with our supporters and raise the funds needed to carry out our mission. We have grave concerns about the negative impact the proposed rate increases – substantially above the rate of inflation – will have on our ability to accomplish our mission. If adopted as proposed, these rate increases will force our organization to reduce mail volume which will inevitably result in reduced revenue, and in turn, will force us to reduce the services which are in dire need—considering that the VAST majority of our workforce is voluntary, we already operate on a razor thin margin, and just cannot absorb the increased cost without repercussions that will be felt all over the world.

We believe the current rate setting system where postal rates are tied to the Consumer Price Index should be maintained. It has succeeded in generating the funds necessary for the Postal Service to meet its ongoing operational needs, while also providing those that rely on the Postal Service with a stable and predictable rate structure. This is critical to our organization's ability to continue to use and rely on the mail.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and we appreciate your review and consideration on behalf of our organization.

Sincerely,

Kerry Peterson
VP of Advancement
Mercy Ships